

## **Proposed Four Corners Zoning Regulation: Executive Summary**

Over the past four decades, the Four Corners area has experienced some of the most dramatic change in the entire Gallatin Valley. What was once a small commercial intersection in a rural part of the county has become a crossroads of highway commercial development, new and old residential neighborhoods, and the center of much of the construction boom of the past 15 years. Recognizing that new growth brings both opportunity and challenge, a group of citizens began meeting with representatives of Gallatin County three and a half years ago to discuss ways to allow for growth while also protecting aspects of the community that make Four Corners a special place to live and work.

In April 2006, the Four Corners Community Plan was approved by the Gallatin County Commission after a year of formal work by a citizen advisory committee. In November of 2006, the same group of citizens began meeting bi-monthly to draft the proposed Four Corners Zoning Regulation as a primary implementation tool of the Community Plan. The group has had open, bi-monthly meetings since November of 2006 and is pleased to present the final draft of the proposed Four Corners Zoning Regulation.

Over the past two years, the group has concentrated on keeping the draft document simple and focused solely on implementing the main ideas behind the Plan: protecting agriculture by providing a basis for canal and ditch companies to comment on new development adjacent to agricultural waterways; protecting rivers, streams, and wetlands in the area by requiring setbacks for new construction; providing reasonable design standards for commercial development along Jackrabbit and Huffine, including basic standards for signs and guidance on site design; and encouraging land use compatibility establishing basic categories of residential, mixed use, and commercial areas, and by requiring landscaped buffers between commercial and residential uses.

While everyone is encouraged to read the entire proposed document, this executive summary is provided to explain the basic concepts behind the proposed regulation.

### **Land Use Categories**

There are three basic land use categories in the proposed Four Corners Zoning Regulation: Agriculture and Rural Residential (ARR); Mixed Use (MU); and Commercial (C). Within the ARR category, there is also a sub-district of Low Density Agricultural and Rural Residential (LDARR) located along the Gallatin River. Within the C category, there is also a sub-district of Neighborhood Commercial (NC) located at two specific intersections in the northeast quadrant of the jurisdiction.

## Use Definitions

Each land use category has a set of uses, both principal and conditional, specific to the category. Principal uses are defined as those uses that are allowed as a matter of right in the land use category. Conditional uses are defined as somewhat more intensive and will require a public hearing and, potentially, conditions of approval by the County Commission to ensure neighboring properties are protected.

All uses allowed as principal uses in the ARR district are allowed in the MU district; all uses in both the ARR district and the MU district are allowed in the C district. The use chart comparing all uses with the specific land use category is attached to the end of this Executive Summary.

## Density

Each land use category has a maximum density for new subdivision. In general:

- *Density in the LDARR sub-district is one lot per 10 acres*, though that density may be increased to one lot per 5 acres if 75% of the site is protected as open space;
- *Density in the ARR sub-district is 1.75 units per gross acre*. This means that, if a landowner has 10 acres, the property may be subdivided into 18 units. (Ten acres multiplied by 1.75 and rounded up). If the landowner has 1 acre, that acre may be subdivided into two lots (one acre multiplied by 1.75 and rounded up). There are provisions in the ARR sub-district to allow developers to purchase development credits from outside the Four Corners jurisdiction, or purchase development rights from within the Four Corners jurisdiction, to increase the density. There is also an open space requirement of at least 20% for all development in this section.
- *Density in both the MU and the C districts is not restricted*. Density in the MU and C sub-districts will be defined by available infrastructure, as well as by height restrictions or site restrictions created by necessary landscaped buffers, rather than by a density specified in the zoning code.

## Development Standards

There are several types of development standards which apply across all land use categories. These development standards are linked directly to the Four Corners Community Plan and provide specific guidelines for new development.

*Standards for the Protection of Agriculture.* The primary standard for the protection of agriculture is a requirement that new subdivision and new construction adjacent to a canal or a ditch contact the responsible ditch company before beginning the project.

*Standards for Land Use Compatibility.* There are four primary standards in this section: 1) basic requirements for lighting on new commercial, industrial, and select residential construction; 2) requirements that high-intensity uses generating more than 500 trips per day provide a traffic study and construct any necessary improvements; 3) standards establishing landscaping requirements for commercial projects being constructed adjacent to residential neighborhoods; and 4) requirements that new gravel pits not be located within a ½ mile of an existing residence without the consent of that residence.

*Standards for the Environment.* There are two primary standards established in this section: setbacks to watercourses and wetlands, and standards guiding the design of any open space within a new residential development.

*Standards Promoting a Quality Streetscape.* There are two primary standards in this section: standards requiring new construction along Jackrabbit and Huffine to orient parking to the side and rear of structures rather than immediately adjacent to the road to avoid strip commercial development, and a prohibition on new billboards.